(c) Steps being taken include curtailment in staff strength, reduction in number of train services, dismantling of redundant sidings, introduction of rail bus services, observance of economy in operation etc.

Rail bridges in Bihar

†1736. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of rail bridges on which rail tracks have been damaged due to flood this year in Bihar;

(b) the amount of loss to railways by it;

(c) by when the work of reconstruction of those damaged bridges and rail tracks would be completed; and

(d) the action taken by Government for permanent solution of the problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) Statistics for Bridge Works are maintained Railway-wise and not State-wise. Four bridges were damaged due to flood in this year on East Central Railway which serves the State of Bihar also. These damaged bridges have been temporarily restored for passage of traffic. The rebuilding of these damaged bridges is expected to take about two years time. However, there has been washout/breaches on bridge approaches in the month of June to July 2004 due to flash flood on certain sections falling in Bihar State served by East Central and Eastern Railway. These washout and breaches have been repaired and restored for traffic on different dates during the period from July to October 2004. On vulnerable locations Railways has planned works like provision of additional waterways along with rebuilding of existing bridges, provision of guide bunds, raising of banks etc. as permanent solution to overcome the problem. These works shall be taken up in phased manner. Sometime flash flood is caused due to breaches of the marginal bunds on rivers in up stream of Railway lines. Maintenance of such marginal bunds, river training works and Railway Affecting Works lies with the State Government. Concerning State Government has been pursued time to time for expeditious completion of River Training Works and proper maintenance of Railway Affecting Works.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Approximate expenditure incurred by Railway for repair of flood affected bridges during this year is Rupees 1.2 Crore.

Regional imbalance in B.G. conversion

1737. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is still a lot of regional imbalance and injustice in the conversion of Meter gauge into Broad gauge particularly for Tamil Nadu;

(b) the corrective steps taken in the allocation of funds adequately on the one side and speedy execution of the scheme by fixing time frame on the other; and

(c) by when the Broad gauge conversion from Madurai to Rameswaram *via* Manamadurai on the one side and from Trichy to Manamadurai on the other will be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No. sir.

(b) The outlay for projects in particular State is done based on a transparent formula having weightage of 15% each for area and population of the State and 70% for throwforward of projects in the State. Project-wise allocation is based on progress of the project, its priority and overall availability of resources.

A number of initiatives have also been taken to augment resources for expediting completion of the ongoing projects. These include sharing by State Governments, Public/Private Partnership, funding from Ministry of Defence, additional resources for National Project of Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla and non-budgetary initiatives for National Rail Vikas Yojana. Remote Area Rail Sampark Yojana has also been announced in 2004-05 which envisages investment of about Rs. 20,000 crore in next five years. However, the funds for the Yojana are yet to be tied up. With these efforts, it may be feasible to expedite the progress of ongoing projects. In view of severe resource constraints and heavy throwforward of ongoing projects, it is not feasible to fix time schedule for all the projects.